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For action

Country programme recommendation**

Croatia

Summary

The present document contains a recommendation for funding from supplementary funds for the country programme of Croatia with a duration of two years. The Executive Director *recommends* that the Executive Board approve the amount of $2,193,000 from supplementary funds, subject to the availability of specific-purpose contributions, for the period 1999 to 2000.

* E/ICEF/1998/12.

** The figures provided in the present document are final and take into account unspent balances of programme cooperation at the end of 1997. They will be contained in the "Summary of 1998 recommendations for general resources and supplementary funding programmes" (E/ICEF/1998/P/L.21).

Basic data
(1996 unless otherwise stated)

Child population (millions, under 18 years)	1.0
U5MR (per 1,000 live births)	11
IMR (per 1,000 live births)	10
Underweight (%, moderate and severe)	1
Maternal mortality rate (per 100,000 live births) (1990)	..
Literacy (% male/female) (1995)	98/97
Primary school enrolment (% net, male/female) (1994)	83/82
Primary school children reaching grade 5 (%)	98
Access to safe water (%)	..
Routine EPI vaccines financed by the Government (%)	..
GNP per capita (US$)	3,800
One-year-olds fully immunized against:	
tuberculosis:	90 per cent
diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus:	91 per cent
measles:	91 per cent
poliomyelitis:	91 per cent
Pregnant women immunized against tetanus:	91 per cent

The situation of children and women

1. The situation of women and children in Croatia continues to be influenced by the consequences of the 1991-1995 war and the transition to a market economy. Although the political situation has stabilized further in 1997, and despite the reintegration of Eastern Slavonia in January 1998, the country still faces a major challenge to progress in the reconciliation process.

2. The social and economic costs of providing support for the over 100,000 refugees, 81,000 displaced persons and 104,000 returnees registered at the end of 1997 (children comprise 23 per cent of the current displaced population), together with the external debt, have placed a heavy burden on the economy. The overall unemployment rate for the first quarter of 1998 was 18 per cent (53 per cent for women). A study undertaken by the Zagreb Market Research Centre in 1997 showed that 88 per cent of households considered that they had lower incomes than needed. Investment in rebuilding social and economic infrastructures and housing damaged during the war has received priority attention.

3. Land-mines continue to be a threat to the population, with an estimated 2 million-3 million occupying 8-12 per cent of the cultivable land. From 1991 to 1998, almost 2,000 casualties were registered, 18 per cent of which were children.

4. Progress is reported in the achievement of the World Summit for Children goals. Immunization coverage continues to be almost universal, with the exception of the Danubian Region (80 per cent coverage), and for measles throughout the country. Primary school enrolment is universal, but is still adversely affected by inadequate classroom equipment and education materials, especially in the Danubian Region. Several studies and assessments of the war-affected areas show that children and mothers there are still at risk and need additional psychosocial, medical, nutritional and educational

support. According to the records of school medical services and school psychologists, almost one third of schoolchildren, parents and teachers exhibit symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorders.

Programme cooperation, 1996-1998

5. At the request of the Government, UNICEF supported a three-year development programme, with a special focus on the rehabilitation of basic services for children and women in those areas to which displaced persons would return. These efforts concentrated primarily on maintaining and strengthening basic services in health, nutrition, education and social welfare, as well as on the promotion of children's rights.

6. In health, the programme supported regional and county-based training on the rational use of paediatric drugs and on the reduction of morbidity rates from acute respiratory infections (ARI) and diarrhoeal diseases. The evaluation showed that the training enabled health workers to advise parents on home treatment of ARI and diarrhoeal diseases. UNICEF contributed to the development and publishing of posters, a manual for health workers and guidance for parents on the integrated management of sick children. Activities also included the provision of essential drugs, basic medical equipment, vitamins and hygienic kits to the war-devastated areas and communities with a high concentration of refugees, displaced persons and returnees.

7. Support to the expanded programme on immunization (EPI) helped to maintain the generally high vaccination coverage, with the exception of measles. In this regard, the most significant UNICEF contribution was in the re-establishment of the cold chain through the provision of cold rooms, refrigerators, cold boxes and vaccine carriers.

8. UNICEF assisted the Government in the introduction and development of health, nutrition and hygiene education in primary and secondary schools. A group of 32 primary schools served as focal points for disseminating an awareness of a healthy lifestyle and safe environment. An educational kit for youth on the dangers of smoking and alcohol was designed and distributed. UNICEF also supported the education of adolescents about responsible attitudes towards sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), HIV/AIDS and drug abuse. More than 50,000 adolescents participated in lectures, thematic courses and group counselling sessions on those topics. Youth peer education was developed and used as the most adequate teaching and learning method. A manual entitled "AIDS - Do Not Die of Ignorance" was the result of long-term cooperative work among youth, health and educational experts. UNICEF supported the establishment of a pilot national health information system for children.

9. In nutrition, UNICEF supported breastfeeding promotion and the transformation of more than one third of maternities into baby-friendly hospitals by the end of 1997. Following the introduction of updated legislation on salt iodization, UNICEF assisted in the development of systems for monitoring compliance with the new standards. Similarly, iron deficiency also was targeted for UNICEF support, and more than 20,000 pregnant women in war-affected areas received iron supplements. UNICEF assisted the growth monitoring and nutrition surveillance of preschool children. The UNICEF-supported supplementary feeding programme reached approximately 15,000 malnourished children living in war-affected poor communities.

10. In education, UNICEF contributed to capacity-building of professionals and institutions in preschool and primary school education. Training was oriented towards improvement of the quality of education in primary schools through the application of the interactive pupil-centred teaching and learning techniques. Some of the problems inherited from the war period, such as overcrowded classrooms, the lack of teaching and learning materials, and behavioural disorders among war-traumatized children, were addressed. In-service training of teachers and school administrators in mine-awareness education for pre- and primary education schools continued. Pre-service training for teachers on education for development was introduced and implemented at Zagreb University.

11. Conflict resolution, tolerance building and life skills education became the flagship project in Eastern Slavonia and the former war zones. An evaluation shows that this project was welcomed by teachers, pupils and parents. It helped to alleviate post-traumatic stress disorders and contributed to the building of a non-violent atmosphere in the classroom.

12. An assessment of the situation of early childhood development (ECD) in Croatia was completed and showed that only 30 per cent of preschool-aged children were enrolled in formal education facilities such as kindergartens. The survey also concluded that the major-

ity of children did not have the opportunity to attend either formal or informal preschool education.

13. UNICEF assisted the Government in developing new policies for the most vulnerable children incorporating new child-care practices into existing services, as well as developing a new multi-professional framework of cooperation at local and national levels. Training for care-providers working with war-traumatized children and women continued through support to a range of institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Training and support also was provided for government and NGO staff working with children in conflict with the law. Foster care for institutionalized children was promoted. The Mayors as Defenders of Children Initiative played a galvanizing role in promoting and integrating services for children at the community level.

14. By organizing public debates and targeted distribution of the advocacy materials on children's rights, UNICEF supported the mobilization of policy makers, legislators and government officials to reflect child rights and goals for children in their agendas. Issues included the various aspects of trauma rehabilitation, mine awareness, and accountability of the state and civil society organizations regarding implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. UNICEF facilitated Government efforts to finalize the development of the National Programme of Action (NPA) for Children and helped to formulate municipal plans of action in war-affected cities under the Mayors as Defenders of Children Initiative.

15. UNICEF provided assistance to strengthen government capacity to respond to sudden emergency situations through training and the provision of emergency supplies. An emergency kit for the psychosocial rehabilitation of trauma- affected children was prepared for psychologists and teachers. The kit consisted of manuals for care-providers, containing guidance on psychosocial trauma alleviation in crisis situations, and also included material for art work to be used in therapy, booklets on the rights of children in difficult circumstances, breastfeeding and special protection advice.

Lessons learned

16. During the programme period, UNICEF-supported interventions have helped to address the social needs in the most war-affected areas of the country, thus contributing to the sustainability and further development of social support structures for vulnerable population groups. Experience of the decentralized action for children in the former front-line cities, including through the Mayors Initiative, have set the scene for future implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women at the provincial level. Through the involvement of parents and teachers in many of these activities, children's participation in the reconciliation and rebuilding processes has been enhanced considerably. The Government's strong commitment to children, reflected in the NPA, offers an opportunity to mobilize civil society to work in the best interests of the child.

Recommended programme cooperation, 1999-2000

Estimated annual expenditure
(In thousands of United States dollars)

	1999	*2000*	*Total*
Supplementary funding			
Child rights promotion	500	350	850
Education	350	225	575
Health and nutrition	350	225	575
Cross-sectoral costs	148	45	193
Total	**1348**	**845**	**2 193**

Programme preparation process

17. The two-year programme of cooperation was prepared through an active consultation process with the Government, NGOs and United Nations partners. A situation analysis provided a sound basis for the setting of priorities and programme planning. The mid-term review with the Government reflected on the positive child-related developments in the country and the collaborative efforts of all the partners concerned. To consolidate those achievements and to move towards a rights-based approach, it was agreed to extend collaboration for a further two years. The recommendations of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child also were considered in the development of the programme.

Programme objectives and strategies

18. The objectives of the programme are to: (a) strengthen national child-related planning and monitoring structures, especially with regard to meeting the needs of the most vulnerable groups, in line with the goals set out in the NPA for Children and state obligations regarding the two Conventions, (b) support life skills development for children and adolescents through enhancing the efficiency of social systems, the promotion of parental awareness and local-level actions; and (c) promote the sustained achievement of the national goals for the survival and healthy development of children, youth and women in war-affected areas through awareness creation and improved service delivery systems.

19. The programme strategies will focus on: (a) strengthening national capacity to review, update and monitor social sector policy in relation to child rights; (b) support to service delivery that targets deprived population groups in war-affected areas with a high percentage of returnees and displaced persons; (c) strengthening community capacity, including the capacity of local NGOs, to work on child-related issues; and (d) the promotion of wider public awareness of child rights. The country programme will advocate for an increase in government allocations for child social services and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Child rights promotion

20. Increased technical and organizational support will be provided to the Ministry of Social Welfare and the Parliamentarian Sub-Committee for the Rights of the Child in developing and implementing policy reforms and securing improved social services for vulnerable children. Cooperation between legislative bodies and committees involved in implementation of the Convention the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women will be encouraged.

21. UNICEF will facilitate capacity-building of partners and promote intersectoral coordination and wide media participation in advocacy for children's rights. Advocacy activities at all levels will be guided by the principles and provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other relevant international treaties for the care and protection of children, such as the ban on land-mines, and minority education.

22. As a contribution to the process of returning refugees and community reconciliation, resource materials will be developed for use by care-providers and in schools on topics such as trauma healing, conflict resolution and confidence building. UNICEF also will promote the use of these resource materials through support to a number of training initiatives. In response to the perceived problem of rising juvenile crime, UNICEF will support training in the judiciary and police force on child rights and the prevention of juvenile delinquency.

Education

23. Education for child development and participation, including the promotion of positive and democratic cohesive behaviour among pupils, teachers and parents, will be undertaken through the preschool, primary and secondary educational system. In order to achieve the active participation of children in education, UNICEF will continue to support interactive pupil-centred teaching and learning methods. Children's participation will be enhanced through implementation of youth peer education. UNICEF also will promote access for all preschool-aged children to ECD activities through the Better Parenting Initiative.

24. Activities will include the training of educators and parents through formal and informal channels, and curriculum development for alternative education. Pre-service training in education for development will be expanded further. In-service training in interactive teaching approaches will enable teachers to use participatory teaching methods. Life skills and interpersonal communication skills in schools and communities as well as conflict resolution techniques also will be promoted.

Mine-awareness education in primary and secondary schools will be supported further and monitored.

Health and nutrition

25. A programme for healthy life promotion, particularly in the war-affected communities, will target preventive health practices, family health, nutrition, the promotion of breastfeeding practices and the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative. Project activities will be undertaken through local health facilities, social centres and schools. Emphasis will be given to ensuring universal immunization coverage, basic health services in areas of return, and promotion of awareness and action among youth in the community for the prevention of STDs and HIV/AIDS. Youth peer education will continue to be used as the most appropriate approach for health education among adolescents.

Monitoring and evaluation

26. The programme will support the establishment and maintenance of a national monitoring system on implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and follow-up on the recommendations of the State Party report to the United Nations. Established monitoring and evaluation mechanisms will continue to be supported and refined, such as the health information system for children, EPI and the prevalence of iodine deficiency disorders and growth monitoring database, as well as the database on capacity-building of care-providers. Monitoring of country programme implementation will be achieved through the preparation of periodic monitoring reports.

Coordination with other agencies

27. UNICEF collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other United Nations agencies operating in Croatia will be maintained through regular coordination meetings. UNICEF activities will be coordinated as appropriate with multilateral and bilateral organizations, including the Council of Europe and the World Bank.

Fund-raising

28. Within the 1999-2000 country programme, UNICEF will finance programme implementation and operations through self-initiated fund-raising activities. Close collaboration with the donor community will be fostered through regular contacts and information to stimulate interest in providing priority financial contributions. Private sector fund-raising will be initiated, and other mechanisms of national fund-raising for UNICEF will be investigated.

Programme management

29. UNICEF assistance to Croatia will be managed by the UNICEF office in Zagreb, under direct supervision of the Special Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, based in Sarajevo. National programme and operations staff will be responsible for advocacy on child rights and the technical implementation of the programme. They also will be involved in fund-raising and donor reporting. The programme will be implemented in close cooperation with relevant sectoral ministries and NGOs. The Steering Committee, composed of government counterparts, chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, will continue to meet periodically to review programme implementation.

TABLE 4

LINKAGE OF PROGRAMME BUDGET AND STAFFING/STAFF COSTS

COUNTRY : CROATIA
PROGRAMME : 1999-2000

PROGRAMME SECTION/AREAS AND FUNDING SOURCE	PROGRAMME BUDGET				POSTS a/										STAFF COSTS b/		
	GR	FSF	NSF	TOTAL	D2/L7	D1/L6	P/L5	P/L4	P/L3	P/L2	IP	NP	GS	TOTAL	IP	LOCAL	TOTAL
GENERAL RESOURCES :																	
CHILD RIGHTS PROMOTION	0			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EDUCATION	0			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
HEALTH AND NUTRITION	0			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CROSS-SECTORAL COSTS	0			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL GR	0			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SUPPLEMENTARY FUNDING :																	
CHILD RIGHTS PROMOTION		0	850,000	850,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EDUCATION		0	575,000	575,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
HEALTH AND NUTRITION		0	575,000	575,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CROSS-SECTORAL COSTS		0	193,000	193,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL SF		0	2,193,000	2,193,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL GR & SF	0	0	2,193,000	2,193,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SUPPORT BUDGET		Operating costs		22,173													
		Staffing			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	4	0	272,478	272,478
GRAND TOTAL (GR + SF + SB)					0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	4	0	272,478	272,478
	Number of posts and staff costs:																
	Current programme cycle										1	4	7	12			
	At the end of proposed programme cycle (indicative only)										0	1	3	4	0	272,478	272,478

GR = general resources.
SF = supplementary funding.
FSF = funded supplementary funding.
NSF = new supplementary funding.
IP = International Professional.
NP = national Professional.
GS = General Service.
SB = support budget.

a/ Each post, regardless of its funding source, supports the country programme as a whole.
b/ Excludes temporary assistance and overtime.

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